

**REPORT/RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
AND RECORD OF ACTION**

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July 29, 2003

FROM: **EMIL A. MARZULLO**, Director
 Special Districts Department

**SUBJECT: SUBMITTAL OF INFORMATION TO THE USDA FOREST SERVICE
 PERTAINING TO THE RELOCATON OF THE MOONRIDGE ANIMAL PARK-BIG
 BEAR VALLEY RECREATION & PARK DISTRICT**

RECOMMENDATION: Acting as the governing body of the Big Bear Valley Recreation and Park District, authorize the submittal of the following documents, as on file with the Special Districts Department, to the USDA Forest Service for their consideration in the relocation of Moonridge Animal Park to their property next to the Big Bear Discovery Center:

1. Bubble Diagrams showing schematic of proposed Living Forest Wildlife Center (Moonridge Animal Park).
2. Relocation Business Plan demonstrating the project's viability in terms of market demand and financial performance.
3. Approach to completing a Joint Management Plan between the District, the Friends of Moonridge Zoo, the San Bernardino National Forest Association and the San Bernardino National Forest, Pacific Southwest Region, USDA Forest Service.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: In January 2001, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was entered into between the Big Bear Valley Recreation and Park District, the Friends of Moonridge Zoo, Inc., the San Bernardino National Forest Association and the San Bernardino National Forest, Pacific Southwest Region, USDA Forest Service. The purpose of the MOU is to provide the framework of cooperation for exploring opportunities to relocate the existing Moonridge Animal Park on the north shore of Big Bear Lake, a site on National Forest Lands. The relocation will become necessary as the land where the animal park currently resides is leased from a private property owner and that lease expires in 2009. The site under consideration is forest land immediately bordering the west and north sides of the Big Bear Discovery Center. This location will allow for the joint use of facilities between the two operations. The Forest Service is interested in partnerships for the development of recreational, interpretive, and environmental education opportunities that will also be environmentally sensitive and economically stimulating to local communities.

The Forest Service has requested that a number of tasks be completed and documents be submitted before a decision is made to proceed with a formal project for evaluation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The signatories to the MOU have completed three tasks, which must now be submitted to the Forest Service for their review:

	Record of Action of the Board of Supervisors
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1. Bubble Diagrams showing schematic of proposed Living Forest Wildlife Center.
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3. Approach to completing a Joint Management Plan.

The Joint Management Plan will be prepared by the District, the San Bernardino Forest Association (operators of the Big Bear Discovery Center) and the Friends of the Moonridge Zoo. This task will take place over the next six months and provide all parties with a plan for operating the Living Forest Wildlife Center; the responsibilities of each party to the MOU will be defined.

Approval of this recommendation will authorize the District to submit to the USDA Forest Service Bubble Diagrams, a relocation business plan, and Joint Management Plan approach in connection with the relocation of the Moonridge Zoo. Approval of these actions will authorize the submittal of these items to the USDA Forest Service and will recognize the support of the Board of Supervisors in pursuing this project.

REVIEW BY OTHERS: This action has been reviewed by County Counsel (L. Thomas Krahelski) on July 1, 2003, and by the County Administrative Office (Wayne Thies, Administrative Analyst) on July 3, 2003.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: There is no financial impact associated with this action. The relocation of the Animal Park and all associated costs will be accomplished with Federal and State Grants, and Priority Policy Needs funds from the Third District and local contributions and fund raising.

SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT(S): Third

PRESENTER: Emil A. Marzullo

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